

# UNITED STATES FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

Within the spirit and intent of the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined that the action of (describe action):

**Issuance of a subpermit to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for the rest of 2005 to take (1) up to 35 gray wolves involved in verified depredations on domestic animals, (2) wolves having severe and highly contagious diseases, and (3) wolves with serious injuries.**

X is a categorical exclusion as provided by 516 DM 8 [8.5.A(1), 8.5.B(2), and 8.5.C(1) apply] and 516 DM 2, Appendix 1. No further documentation will therefore be made.

is found not to have significant environmental effects as determined by the attached Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact.

is found to have significant effects, and therefore further consideration of this action will require a notice of intent to be published in the Federal Register announcing the decision to prepare an EIS.

is not approved because of unacceptable environmental damage, or violation of Fish and Wildlife Service mandates, policy, regulations, or procedures.

is an emergency action within the context of 40 CFR 1506.11. Only those actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency will be taken. Other related actions remain subject to NEPA review.

Other supporting documents (list):

- Memorandum of March 17, 2004, from Ron Refsnider to TJ Miller
- Environmental Assessment: Management of Wolf Conflicts and Depredating Wolves in Wisconsin – By USDA Wildlife Services.
- Summary of Relevant Points supporting a conclusion of negligible adverse impact
- Biological Opinion

(Signature) 3/28/05  
(1) Initiator Date

(Signature) 3-29-05  
(2) RHPO Date

(Signature) 4/1/05  
(3) Solicitor Date

(Signature) 4-1-2005  
(4) REC Date

# **Attachment to Environmental Action Memo for Issuance of Wolf Subpermit to Wisconsin DNR, March 2005**

## **Summary of Relevant Points Supporting a Conclusion of Negligible Adverse Impact**

- This action will allow the resumption of depredation control actions that were previously carried out in a near-identical fashion by largely the same personnel, but under the authority of a different section of the Endangered Species Act. Thus, this action is a continuation of previous activities representing an administrative change, rather than a substantive or environmental change, and the impacts of the actions are unchanged.
- The wolf population in Wisconsin and Michigan greatly exceeds the federal recovery goal, and has exceeded that goal since 1999.

The wolf population in Wisconsin has continued to increase during the two previous years of lethal depredation control, indicating this continuation of such actions will not impede the continued viability of the wolf population in the state.

USDA-Wildlife Services prepared a detailed “Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Management of Wolf Conflicts and Depredating Wolves in Wisconsin” in 2003 (attached). The EA concluded that the proposed action that it assessed (which included the activities encompassed by the draft subpermit amendments):

- would have no single or cumulative adverse environmental consequences
  - would have extremely low impacts on nontarget species
  - would primarily result in beneficial economic and social impacts
  - would result in no negative impacts to the physical environment
- The authority to kill wolves with severe cases of mange and other contagious diseases will remove animals that very likely would die if released back to the wild. It is also likely that removing these wolves will provide positive benefits to the wolf population by reducing the possibility of these diseases spreading to packmates causing additional mortalities.

This permit will be reviewed annually by the Service prior to renewal, and the conditions and limitations can be adjusted as necessary to ensure continuation of wolf recovery in Wisconsin.

This permit requires that all wolf mortalities be reported to the Service within 15 days, ensuring the ability to promptly rescind the permit or modify its provisions if unanticipated impacts occur from the permitted activities.